

NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group Facilitator Screening Tool

This tool has been developed by individuals who are currently involved in recruiting and evaluating consumers for NAMI Connection facilitators. It is offered as a relevant and effective guide for interviewing applicants.

Initial screening is a critical part of the application process. Be sure you have read the application before conducting the screening interview. This tool is utilized to help “screen out” individuals who may not be good candidates for facilitator training due to their current state of health, lack of communication skills, inability to make and keep commitments, desire to merely look for a leadership position, or the likelihood of using the position of facilitator for their own rather than the group’s needs. Concern for both the basic comfort level of applicants during the training, and their potential for effective group facilitation, are primary considerations in the screening process.

Starting the interview with the job requirements

The application includes the following information about the job requirements for NAMI Connection Facilitators:

- ✓ Willingness to undergo training and to adhere to fidelity to the NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group model
- ✓ to adhere to fidelity to the NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group model is required
- ✓ Commitment to perform weekly support groups for a minimum of one year
- ✓ Ability to provide group participant data as required
- ✓ Willingness to identify potential new facilitators from their support groups
- ✓ Positive regard for, or personal experience with mutual support
- ✓ Be or become a member of NAMI

At the beginning of the interview, interviewers should review these requirements, and ask the candidate if s/he understands them.

Moving to key interview questions

There are a number of important questions relating to job requirements which can usefully be asked during the interview process. It is not necessary to ask all of the questions. They are presented to provide assistance in the interview evaluation.

Following each question are both “red flags” and “points to listen for” in responses. These are just suggestions to help determine how ready candidates for training are to take on the responsibilities of a facilitator and/or how successful they might be. Red flag responses might be a signal of qualities which would rule out a candidate, and need to be explored a little with the applicant to clarify anything of concern.

A form is provided for notation of candidates’ responses to the questions. (Page 6)

Interview Questions

1) Why do you want to be a NAMI Connection facilitator?

- ✓ Points to listen for:
 - Want to give back
 - Want to help others

- Want to give others support
- Listen for words or phrases such as ‘wanting to give back’
- To be part of the national rollout giving people a place to go when they need it.
- It has become necessary for my community. We have nothing at this time.
- ✓ Red flags
 - I want to tell others how to make their lives better
 - I have led groups and I know what people need
 - I like to be in charge
 - If I get this job I can get another

2) How do you define recovery?

- ✓ Points to listen for:
 - Wellness
 - I participate in life and am at peace with myself.
 - I am able to manage my daily living.
 - I use coping skills to help myself
 - I am able reach out and help others through my own experiences.
 - I am alert for signs of relapse and make the necessary adjustments in a timely manner.
 - Listen carefully for language and what type of coping skill set the person has acquired.
- ✓ Red flags
 - When you don’t have to take meds, go to the doctor or therapist (anti-traditional care)
 - Talk of going off medications, not see a doctor, etc are not considerate positive attitudes toward recovery. Please write down any concerns for future reference.
 - I want to tell others how to use alternative medicine.
 - I want to tell others how to use prayer.

3) How are you doing in recovery right now?

- ✓ Points to listen for:
 - I’ve been doing well for x-period of time
 - I have a wellness plan in place.
 - I can trust the certain family or friends to let me know if I am not doing well.
 - Listen carefully to how the person defines his recovery status. Ask for some short term goals that have been accomplished
- ✓ Red flags
 - I think I’m okay but other people have told me they think I need help

4) Why do you feel you are ready to “give back” to others the kind of support you’ve had or would like to have had?

- ✓ Points to listen for:
 - It makes me feel good knowing that I can help others
 - There is no one true answer to this questions but the statements should reflect a positive attitude
 - In helping others I help myself, it makes me aware of what helps and what doesn’t.

- ✓ Red flags
 - There are a lot of people who need to know what I know
- 5) Have you participated in a peer support group?**
- ✓ Points to listen for:
 - Yes and the best thing is knowing that I am not alone; there are others who suffer from mental illness.
 - Suggest they attend a NAMI Connection or other support group before they become a facilitator. You might wish to continue the interview after the person has had the opportunity to participate in a group.
 - ✓ Red flags
 - No, but I think I can do it. (Suggest they attend a NAMI Connection or other support group before they become a facilitator.)
 -
- 6) What do you know about NAMI Connection? (If nothing, explain the program.)**
- ✓ Points to listen for:
 - It is a support group and not a therapy group
 - Ask for a verbal explanation then strengthen the knowledge base if necessary. You might want offer the NAMI document on mission and goals.
 - ✓ Red flags
 - I have lots of experience in leading other support groups and will use my learned skills in NAMI Connection (not necessarily negative if they indicate an ability to learn and change.)
- 7) Do you have extensive knowledge about mental illness? (If yes, do you think you can keep from giving participants answers or counseling them?)**
- ✓ Points to listen for:
 - A support group doesn't always offer solutions it gives offers validation for feelings.
 - Where it was learned. What type of knowledge do they have? Personal or Academic. If professional knowledge is apparent please carefully ask if they can refrain from giving guidance or counseling group members.
 - ✓ Red flags
 - I am a professional and know about mental illness. (Again, not necessarily negative if they indicate an interest in learning with an ability to change.)
- 8) Are there any special needs or considerations we should know about when considering your application?**
- ✓ Points to listen for:
 - My wellness plan includes the following:
 - ✓ Red flags
 - If you feel there are concerns please list them on this application for future reference.
- 9) Do you feel you have accepted your mental illness?**
- ✓ Points to listen for:

- Acceptance of any illness is a process.
- There are usually gradual steps in acceptance and a grieving or letting go of what might have been.
- If you perceive the candidate to be indecisive please write down why for future reference
- Remember, acceptance doesn't mean you have to like it.
- ✓ Red flags
 - Recovery means I am completely well and no longer needs meds.

10) Are you able to share your experiences and what you've learned?

- ✓ Points to listen for:
 - I have made some poor life choices in the past because of my illness.
 - I have learned from my mistakes and am willing to share with others.
 - Look for a strong positive attitude
- ✓ Red flags
 - I have difficulty talking about my illness.
 -

11) Have you had prior experiences with making time commitments similar to this? If yes, how did that work out for you?

- ✓ Points to listen for:
 - Yes, it worked out well. I didn't have any problems.
 - Yes, it was hard, but I was able to be there most of the time.
 - Yes, I wasn't well enough to follow through, but now I'm fairly sure I am.
- ✓ Red flags
 - No. Ask if they think they are ready now.
 - Yes, I tried to keep it but I didn't do well. Ask if they think they can do it now and why.
 - Yes, not well. It's really hard for me to follow through on commitments because of my illness

Closing

Thank candidates for the conversation you've had.

Let them know when they will be notified about the results of their application and screening.

Remind them that even if they attend the training, if there is a question on their part, or on the trainers' part, about their abilities they may not be certified at that training. If the timing is bad for them it may be suggested that they wait until the next training.

NAMI Connection Facilitator Screening Interview Questions

Applicant's name: _____

Date of Interview: _____

Job requirements

- ✓ Willingness to undergo training and adhere to fidelity to program model is required
- ✓ Commitment to perform weekly support groups for a minimum of one year
- ✓ Ability to provide group participant data as required
- ✓ Willingness to identify potential new facilitators from their support groups
- ✓ Positive regard for, or personal experience with mutual support
- ✓ Be or become a member of NAMI

___ Applicant understands the job requirements

Reminder: It is not necessary to ask all questions. These are just suggestions to help you to evaluate for how ready the consumer is to take on the responsibilities of a facilitator and/or how successful they might be.

1) Why do you want to be a NAMI Connection facilitator?

2) How do you define recovery?

3) How are you doing in recovery right now?

4) Why do you feel you are ready to "give back" to others the kind of support you've had or would like to have had?

5) Have you participated in a peer support group?

6) What do you know about NAMI Connection? (If nothing, explain the program.)

7) Do you have extensive knowledge about mental illness? (If yes, do you think you can keep from giving participants answers or counseling them?)

8) Are there any special needs or considerations we should know about when considering your application? (If yes, record for future reference.)

9) Do you feel you have accepted your mental illness?

10) Are you able to share your experiences and what you've learned?

11) Have you had prior experiences with making time commitments similar to this? If yes, how did that work out for you?

Anything else you would like to note about the applicant?

Compliment the person genuinely after they finish the interview.

Let them know that you will get back to them in _____ days/weeks. (Whenever decisions will be made on who will be invited to participate in training.)

Remember to get back to them.